CLASSIFICATION

Strike Following Fifth Wage-Price Pact

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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- West, * allegedly a member of the KPOe Central Committee and frequent contributor to the Communist monthly Weg und Tiel, expressed bewilderment at the Party's failure to call an immediate general strike following the announcement of the fifth wage-price pact. He stated that Party leaders were almost equally divided on this matter, but that older members of the Central Committee lead by Fischer** persuaded others against this step, giving the following reasons:
 - Many key workers in Vienna plants were on leave at that time.
 - The food situation during the summer is less critical than it will be in the coming months when fresh vegetables and fruit will no longer be available.
 - The Party anticipates a sixth wage-price agreement this fall which would provide grounds for a general strike of all Austrian workers including non-Communists.
- West believes that the Party lost considerable prestige by losing this chance to call a strike. He adds, however, that the loss would have been still greater had the strike failed. He says that the Party is now staking its hope on the election of shop stewards.

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- At a confidential briefing session called by Maierhofer, district secretary for the Baden district, on 16 July 1951 and held at KPOe headquarters in Beden, Mnierhofer read a document from the KPOe Landesleitung in which the following points were set forth:
 - Careful gauging of worker opinion in Vienna and Lower Austria shows that a general strike would not find full support, especially in view of the fact that even KPOe shop stewards voted for the fifth wage-price agreement as witnessed in the basic ballot held by the union of building and wood workers trades. According to Maierhofer, although the Communists attended, only one dissenting vote was cast.
 - The Landesleitung recommends that the occasion be used for self criticism, since the Party clearly lacked advance preparation. It urges members to direct all their efforts to the shop steward elections, and to recruit as many leftists as possible for the unions and shop councils. It feels that a sixth ware-price agreement will be concluded t is fall, and urges an all-

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out effort to promote a strike at that time. The interim period is to be used to intensify cell activities and to counteract a sentiment that a general strike would be concomitant with an attempt by the Party to install a peoples democracy in Austria.

4. Discussions among Party officials at this meeting showed that the majority were secretly relieved that a strike was not called. Some point out that the Party on its own would have called a strike but for lack of Soviet support. Officials believe that the Party lossed prestige through its failure to act successfully on behalf of the workers, and fear the Party will suffer through lowered membership morale and a loss of new recruits.

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Comment: Probably Franz West.

*** Comment: Presumably Ernst Fischer.

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